

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and study of old-time dime and nickel novels, popular story papers, series books, and pulp magazines

Vol. 64, No. 5

October 1995

Whole No. 635

## DIME NOVEL SKETCHES



### NICODEMUS LEGEND TAMES THE COLORADO LAND BARONS

#### No. 274: NICODEMUS LEGEND DIME NOVELS

Publisher: E. C. Allen, Augusta, Maine. Issues: 101 (highest number seen advertised). Dates: 1872-1886. Schedule: Quarterly first few years, then monthly. Size: 8 x 10 inches. Pages: 64-100. Price: 10c. Illustrations: Black and white pictorial cover. Contents: Frontier and Western stories by Ernest Pratt writing in first person as Nicodemus Legend. Extremely rare in spite of their popularity in 1876.



## THE HITCHING POST

**Dime Novel.** (1) A term which refers to any paper covered book of fiction of a sensational nature (e.g., frontier and western stories), published between 1860 and 1915 as part of a numbered or unnumbered series issued on a regular basis and selling for a fixed price, usually, but not always, ten cents. The cover size is often 4 x 6 inches or 5 x 7 inches with 100 pages of text. So named from the series (*Beadle's Dime Novels*) published by Beadle & Adams (1860-1874). Variant formats exist. So called "broadleaves" and "nickel weeklies" range from 7 x 10 inches to 9 x 13 inches with 16 to 64 (or more) pages. "Thick book" or paper covered novel formats are usually 5 x 7 inches with 150 to 300 pages of text. (2) The term is often more generally applied to any cheap publication in paper covers and has been extended loosely to refer to paperbound books from other periods of publishing history. (from *The Dime Novel Companion*)

This issue of *Dime Novel Round-Up* was made possible by the generosity of Bill Dial, co-creator and Executive Producer of *Legend*, Barb Mackintosh, Production Executive of *Legend*, and the members of the MacGyver List on the Internet. We wish to thank them for their support and encouragement.

Founding Editor: Ralph F. Cummings

Editor Emeritus: Edward T. LeBlanc

Editor: J. Randolph Cox

Assistant Editor: Deidre A. Johnson

### EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

John T. Dizer   Deidre A. Johnson   Edward T. LeBlanc  
Lydia C. Schurman

### BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE

J. Randolph Cox   Deidre A. Johnson   Richard Bleiler

Circulation Assistant: Brian KenKnight

Dime Novel Round-Up Vol. 64 No. 5  
(USPS 157-140)

Whole No. 635 October 1995  
(ISSN 0012-2874)

Published six times a year at P.O. Box 226, Dundas, MN 55019. J. Randolph Cox, editor, same address to whom new and renewal subscription, address changes and advertising should be sent. Subscription \$15 per year, \$27 for two years. Advertising rates: \$25 full page, \$15 half page, \$10 quarter page, \$5 eighth page or less. **All editorial and advertising material for the next issue should reach the editor by Nov. 1, 1995.** Second class postage paid at Dundas, MN 55019. Postmaster: send form 3579

to P.O. Box 226, Dundas, MN 55019.

Printed by Small World Press, Inc. 300 Railway Street N, Dundas, MN 55019.



# THE LEGENDARY EXPLOITS OF ERNEST PRATT;

or,

A Dime Novelist as His Own Hero

[The Story of the *Legend* Television Series]

J. Randolph Cox  
St. Olaf College

1876. It is summer afternoon on the Colorado prairie. In the distance we can see a stagecoach moving rapidly across the terrain as though pursued by a band of horsemen. There are two passengers in the coach, a man and a woman. The man is dressed in the uniform of the Seventh Cavalry, his blonde hair worn fashionably long. This is George Armstrong Custer, fabled boy general of the U. S. Army. The woman is his wife, Elizabeth.

The driver does not look back, but urges the horses to greater speed nevertheless. But is he really so unaware of the pursuing riders? A crafty smile plays upon his lips and the sun glints on a strange gold patch worn over one eye.

Further in the distance, but high above the prairie, we can discern yet another vehicle in pursuit of the stagecoach. It is a gold-colored hot-air balloon with the word "Legend" in red letters on the air bag. Suddenly, a figure separates itself from the gondola beneath the air bag. A moment of hesitation, then the wind catches it, and it is launched on two great wings.

Faster than the hot-air balloon, it moves in a descending path toward the stagecoach and the gap between winged being and the coach narrows...

What is this, the opening scene from a dime novel? Not quite, but almost. This is a scene from an episode of the dramatic television series, *Legend*. The episode, as first aired on May 9, 1995, is "Custer's Next to Last Stand." The character descending from the hot-air balloon is our hero, Ernest Pratt, dissolute writer of dime novels, reluctantly portraying his own series character, Nicodemus Legend.

*Legend* had its premiere April 18, 1995, with a two-hour film, "Birth of a Legend," on the UPN network. It ran almost every week, with some pre-emptions, until August 22, for an additional eleven one-hour episodes, before it left the air. This is not the place to discuss its demise, but to celebrate its very existence.

### Origins

Where did a television series about a writer of dime novels receive its inspiration? In a telephone interview with *Legend* co-creator and executive producer, Bill Dial, your editor learned something of the genesis of the concept.

It had its beginnings at a Los Angeles Dodgers baseball game where Dial and fellow producer, Michael Piller (part of the creative team behind recent *Star Trek* shows *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*), were talking. The germ of the concept came from Piller: a writer who is reluctantly forced to be one of his characters. Dial, with his interest in westerns and American history, began to rough in the outline.

Take two figures from American history, each an individual, neither quite like the other, and mix some of their basic traits and what do you have? The figures here were the quintessential dime novel writer, Ned Buntline (real name, Col. Edward Zane Carroll Judson, 1823-1886) and eccentric physicist and inventor, Nikola Tesla (1856-1943). From these two real life figures came the outlines for the two *Legend*-ary figures in the television series. The dime novel writer in the series is Ernest Pratt who teams up with a visionary Hungarian scientist and inventor named Janos Bartok—pardon, that is Janos *Christoff* Bartok.

It was about one and one half years from the planting of that initial unformed germ of an idea about a writer before *Legend* became a reality. Dial began thinking about the idea in early 1994, with serious work on the entire project commencing about May or June. There was much research to be done, including background reading on dime novels, the late 19th century, and the possibilities that science offered in 1876. Shooting for the pilot began in January this year for the broadcast date of April 18.

Dial said that the year 1876 was chosen as a starting point because it was, in his phrase, "the up-curve of the Industrial Revolution," and therefore suggested infinite possibilities for a television series. For one thing, it was the year the telephone was invented and America began to notice new technologies. It was also a significant year in the history of the Western United States when two of its "legends", General Custer and Wild Bill Hickok, met their deaths in memorable ways. It was also the year that the James-Younger Gang was defeated in the attempt to rob the First National Bank of Northfield, Minnesota.

That the real life prototypes for the television characters were not true contemporaries (Buntline was in his declining years as Tesla reached the peak of his inventive powers) only indicates something of the nature of the creative imagination. The television series as planned and executed became a series of plot situations that did twists on recorded history and posed the question, "what

if?" What if President Ulysses S. Grant had been abducted by a southerner for whom the memory of Reconstruction still rankled? What if Wild Bill Hickok had *not* been killed by Jack McCall in the Number Ten Saloon in Deadwood?

The first "what if?" was, of course, the teaming-up of Ernest Pratt and Janos Bartok. Pardon, Janos *Christoff* Bartok. In the television series, Pratt was played with an engaging conviction by Richard Dean Anderson, who had gained a following as the star of the *MacGyver* series on ABC. John de Lancie, known to many viewers for his role as the enigmatic "Q" on the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* series was cast as Professor Bartok.

### Characters

According to the descriptions of the characters in the Legend Press Kit, provided me by Paramount, Ernest Pratt is 40 years old in 1876. Born in Boston, he attended Harvard College for a time, and decided to become a writer in spite of the opposition of his banker father. In San Francisco he became a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. It was here he met Mark Twain and was inspired to write novels, his first successful one being *Solitary Knight of the High Plains*, about an adventurer named Nicodemus Legend. Legend is the hero of at least fifteen dime novels set near Sheridan, Colorado, which are often referred to by name in the episodes. (As the series progressed, additional titles were added to his bibliography.) Pratt wrote in first person, adopted the name of his hero as his pen name, and thus confused many of his readers, who accepted the Legend stories as real.

The character of Nicodemus Legend is a direct contrast to that of Ernest Pratt. Pratt is an admitted womanizer, gambler and drinker. Legend is a dashing romantic figure who wears a distinctive yellow buckskin outfit, hates violence, and tries to use his brains instead of a gun. It is common knowledge that Legend neither drinks nor gambles, which makes it difficult for Pratt to enjoy himself in a saloon. People who have trouble separating fact from fiction will not allow the writer to buy a drink or sit in on a card game. In keeping with other dime novel heroes, Legend is known by several alternate phrases. Among other phrases, he is the Knight of the Rockies and the Paladin of the Prairies.

Janos Christoff Bartok was born in Hungary in 1840, which makes him younger than Pratt. Truly a renaissance man, his specialties are mathematics and electrical engineering. He attended the University of Budapest before coming to the United States, where he went to work at Western Union. It was here that he met Thomas Edison and the two brilliant scientists became fierce competitors. (This much parallels the life of Nikola Tesla, who was directly involved in the great debate with Edison over the advantages of alternating or direct electrical



current.) In the *Legend* saga, Edison claimed Bartok had stolen his ideas and the resulting media attention led the Hungarian to move West where he established his scientific laboratories near Sheridan, Colorado. He is a fan of the Legend dime novels and sets out to invent the devices the writer only created in his imagination.

Professor Bartok is one of the more interesting characters to appear in a television series. Part of this is due to the way his part was written, but much is due to the superb interpretation of the part by John de Lancie. Bartok created the situation where he and Pratt combine to be the real Legend, but he often alternates between being amused and exasperated by his colleague and protege. He must remind Pratt that once he put pen to paper and created his persona as Nicodemus Legend he had a public to please, a reputation to uphold.

But Bartok is also a scientist and inventor with an ego of his own. He does not suffer anyone to refer to his inventions as "tricks" or "gadgets." His arsenal of them is worth a dissertation on the possibilities for the creative genius in nineteenth century America. The most famous are the Bartok electro-fulminator (more about that later) and the Bartok steam-powered town and country quadrovelocipede. (The dependance on a horseless carriage in 1876 is welcomed by Ernest Pratt who does not seem to get along too well with horses.) Beside these we are treated to demonstrations of Bartok's weeping gas (from which the user is protected by the Bartok air conservancy mask); there is the Bartok steam-powered land locomotive (a variation on the quadrovelocipede), the Bartok Trojan Cow (an example of the Bartok non-violent perpetrator control devices which have the potential for revolutionizing the future of rustler surveillance), the Automated Spanish Reactor (based on the principle of the bolas), the Bartok arctic liquidic air mist, the Bartok Tri-dimensional recording camera, and the famous Bartok Aerial Retardant Descendent Parasol.

While working for Western Union, Bartok met a young Mexican mathematician named Huitzilopochtli Ramos who had studied at Harvard. Ramos (played by Mark Adair Rios) joined Bartok in his Colorado laboratories to work alongside him in his experiments which included rainmaking. Bartok may be one of the few people who can pronounce Ramos' first name. He is obviously considered to be a colleague and not a mere assistant, although it takes the entire series for him to come into his own as a significant character in an adventure. There appears to be no end to Ramos' accomplishments and we learn that he studied literature as well as theology at Harvard. Theology? A good scientist learns to hedge his bets, confides Ramos.

The final episode, "Skeletons in the Closet", is a mix of the somber with its

theme of racial prejudice, and the light-hearted derring-do that is central to the Legend saga. A summa cum laude in physics from Harvard College, Ramos is descended from Aztec kings. After finding the skeleton of a countryman, identifiable only by the Aztec ring on its finger, Ramos sets out on his own to find the rest of the treasure represented by the ring and return it to its rightful place with his people.

Among the other recurring characters in the series are Chamberlain Brown, the Mayor of Sheridan, Sheriff Motes, and Harry Parver, the representative of Pratt's publisher, E. C. Allen. But the most memorable one of the entourage is undoubtedly Skeeter, played by Jarrad Paul. Skeeter is recognizable by his hair, which stands on end permanently due to the electrical charges which emanate from the Bartok laboratories. His explanation is that Dr. Larkin has diagnosed him to be allergic to electricity.

Dr. Larkin is one of those figures whom we never see due to his being in another part of the county taking care of an epidemic of one sort or another.

#### **The Series Premise**

In conversation with Bill Dial, the "what if?" of the teaming of Pratt and Bartok, came out as central to the theme of the series. Dial saw the series as dealing with the uses and abuses of celebrity and how it can get out of control. As Legend, Pratt is a celebrity who has trouble coming to grips with his own persona. He is the traditional dissolute writer always up against a deadline. In reading about Ned Buntline, Dial realized he was the perfect prototype, and he admitted that Buntline himself would make a great subject for a film.

We who study the dime novels themselves and their writers will recognize the truth of this portrait of Pratt. The quintessential dime novelists (Buntline, Prentice Ingraham, Frederic Van Rensselaer Dey and others) were always up against a deadline and some of them were also helped along in life by a liberal infusion of alcohol. Their characters, like Nicodemus Legend, were often larger than life and dressed as flamboyantly as does Legend on the small screen. Gilbert Patten, in an article for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1931, described Edward L. Wheeler, author of the Deadwood Dick stories for Beadle & Adams as "a phony Westerner." Though he had never been further west than Titusville, Pennsylvania, he pretended to an intimate knowledge of the Dakota Territory and dressed like a Westerner.

In the Legend saga the two characters, Pratt and Bartok, agree to work together when Pratt realizes he cannot get along without the Hungarian. Pratt is continually being drawn into situations where his alter ego is expected to champion the cause of right. The abilities of Legend are not things that Pratt can

emulate in the pilot. Bartok explains that they will have to compensate with science for Pratt's shortcomings. He demonstrates a few of the inventions that he is convinced will help, including the "Bartok electro-fulminator", a sort of electric gun that stuns whoever it is directed against. Outlaws refer to it as the "Legend lightning-bolt". These inventions are a necessity in this crusade, explains Bartok, for "there will be times when Legend will have to ward off the heavily-armed uncouth among us."

"Your celebrity," he goes on, "has the power to give our enemies pause. My science can enhance that reputation and together we can create the real Legend." In the second story, "Mr. Pratt Goes to Sheridan", Bartok elaborates on this when he says that while he can create what Pratt can imagine, he cannot do it alone. They need each other. "Separately," he says, "you and I are heroes to no one. Together we could become Legendary."

And so, the legend is created. A costume is devised for public appearances and Ernest Pratt learns (painfully at times) how to lead a double life. Bill Dial told me that someone asked him when was Pratt supposed to be Pratt and when was he supposed to be Legend. The truth is that the character is always Pratt, but he is obliged to *portray* Legend. He learns to use the celebrity to get what he needs out of life. Thus, the dissolute writer is redeemed by his character, the hero.

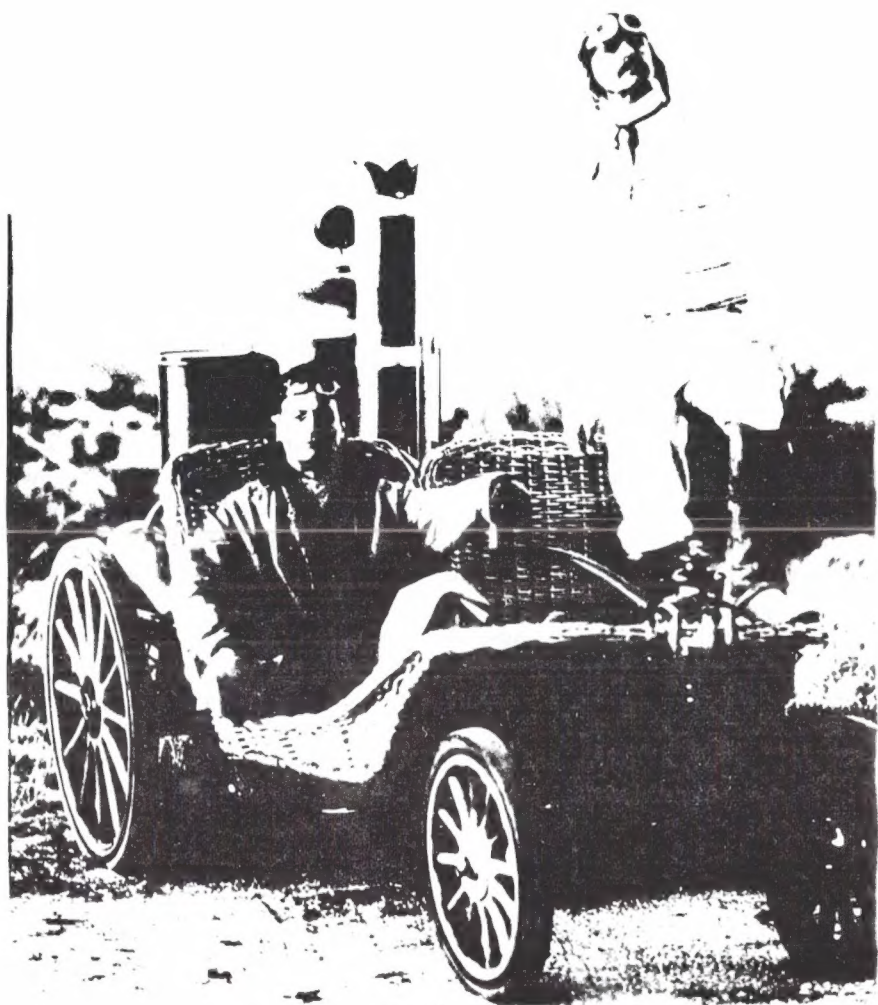
### **The Saga—Style and Substance**

In the twelve episodes that make up the Legend saga, the viewer is treated to stories that fall somewhere between the two extremes of filming true historic events and telling good stories. Dial had definite ideas from his reading of history that he wanted to try out in the series. He believes in what Gore Vidal said once about trying to tell a good story, but not betraying history. He does not believe in distorting history as a whim.

He also did not want to rely on doing the obvious. It was his desire to have a scene in every episode in which the viewer would think he or she knew what was going to happen, but be surprised by what really does happen.

The dialogue in the scripts is often witty and so well written that each character has a distinctive style. Pratt is, of course, well-read and can quote Keats as easily as he can quote himself. Bartok, a European intellectual, uses the formal speech suggestive of someone to whom English is a second language. The gunfighter, John Wesley Coe, hired by the land barons in "Birth of a Legend" to kill Pratt, may be semi-literate, but his speech suggests he wants to impress others. The Sabine shootist (an alternate description for Coe) suggests to Pratt (in character as Nicodemus Legend) that they face each other at 40





Professor Janos Christoff Bartok (John de Lancie)  
and Nicodemus Legend (Richard Dean Anderson)  
in the Bartok Steam-Powered Town and Country  
Quadrovelocipede

paces, not the usual 50. His eyesight is not what it was once and he's left his "spectacles in the conveyance." Pratt asks him if he has ever read one of his books. No, Coe admits, he hasn't. "In my line of work, a man who reads is a man who is not keeping his eye on the door."

The characters in the Legend saga are aware of the conventions peculiar to fiction in general and dime novels in particular and often refer to something as "a device of the genre." According to Pratt, the portrait of Nicodemus Legend on the dime novel cover is such a device. For the hero to walk off into the sunset at the end of a story is another "device of the genre".

Another hallmark of the scripts are the "homages," references to people or incidents that may lie outside the world of the saga, but will be recognizable to the alert viewer. When it is suggested by Bartok that Pratt had plagiarized the use of an underwater helmet in one of his books from Jules Verne he replies that it is an homage. When the "killer dwarves" in a story Pratt is dictating call out "Follow the yellow suede suit," we are to be reminded of *The Wizard of Oz* and the dictate to follow the yellow brick road. The episode "Bone of Contention" concerns the search for a dinosaur skeleton; its revelation scene uses as background music the music from the movie *Jurassic Park*. In "Fall of a Legend," Pratt is unjustly accused of murder and is being dragged off to his own hanging. His monologue borrows from the "Dead Parrot" sketch of *Monty Python and His Flying Circle*, substituting "I'll be an ex-Pratt" for John Cleese's "It's an ex-parrot." An homage of another sort appears in the opening scene of the pilot. We see a Nicodemus Legend dime novel enacted as the James Boys rob the bank in Gallatin, Missouri. This is historic fact, but the choice of this bank was because Barb Mackintosh, Production Executive for *Legend* came from Gallatin.

Like so many dime novel writers, Pratt writes his novels in longhand, with a pen or pencil. When we see the results of his creation the scene is never completed. He has a problem which requires a solution which occasionally is supplied by Professor Bartok. As a writer, Pratt may refer to himself as a writer of books, not dime novels, but he does admit to giving his readers "a certain value for their dime" and appreciating someone who "enjoys a fine dime".

There was an intent from the beginning to deal with clichés in the western genre in a satiric way. In "Fall of a Legend," Pratt is awaiting execution for a murder he didn't commit. Through the window of his cell we hear music from a doleful harmonica, a signal that this is a tragic scene. However, on hearing it, Pratt goes to the window and tells the player to "stuff it!" Pratt's attempts to disguise himself fail because his face has been on too many dime novels and is

too familiar. Even a simple bandanna, the staple of so many bandit scenes in westerns, has no effect. Nicodemus Legend may have successfully disguised himself as a one-legged buffalo hunter (*Beasts of the Badlands*) and a Chinese magician (*Traders of the Chisholm Trail*), but those were dime novels and Pratt's own eyes give him away every time. He objects when the one to penetrate his disguise refers to them as "beady eyes", but there is no escape from his celebrity.

How well did the series represent the dime novel world, the books themselves and their writers? With minor exceptions, it did a remarkably credible job. While Pratt seems to be paid more than most real dime novelists for writing fewer books (he is seen negotiating for \$2,000 a book and a contract with his publisher that calls for five books per year), we must remember on whom he was based. Ned Buntline claimed to have made \$20,000 in his best year and Prentice Ingraham told Gilbert Patten that he made \$15,000 a year.

One of the most unique features of the series is that it deals with a writer who is actually seen in the act of writing. If you think about it, this is not an easy thing to present on the screen with credibility. Pratt scribbles in pencil on large sheets of paper and makes it all seem real and not just an actor's pose.

Pratt's publisher in the series is E. C. Allen of Augusta, Maine, a real publisher of story papers and related publications. Asked where he found Edward C. Allen of Augusta, Maine, as Pratt's publisher, Dial remembered reading about him while doing research in the UCLA Library. What fascinated him was Allen's success as an entrepreneur. Subscribers to the Allen publications, such as the *People's Literary Companion*, were rewarded with premiums. Dial learned that one of Allen's promotional schemes involved giving away flower seeds. He confided that he wanted to work a line of dialogue into a scene in "The Life, Death, and Life of Wild Bill Hickok" in which one of the McCall gang would complain to Pratt that he had sent in his coupons for flower seeds (no doubt clipped from issues of the *Nicodemus Legend Dime Novels*), but had never received his flower seeds!

Perhaps the greatest anachronism is all the talk about royalties and residual rights. Dime novelists were generally paid a flat fee per novel. It was the **publisher** who arranged for new editions and foreign publication, thereby growing rich on the profits from their hired hands. No matter what heights the writer of dime novels might aspire to reach, the writer was literally a paid servant.

And yet ... and yet ... what we are dealing with in *Legend* is a **fictional** dime novel writer through whose eyes and exploits we are afforded a view of the



world of 1876. Real dime novel writers **did** aspire to a greatness of a sort and cut the best deals they could. Some had been reporters (like Ernest Pratt) or teachers (like Edward S. Ellis, author of *Seth Jones; or, The Captives of the Frontier*). Some had really seen the West and knew what it was like. Some found escape from a sorry existence in the world they created on paper. Even publishers might have had little knowledge of the real West, and like E. C. Allen of *Legend*, be suspected of having "the kind of idea of the Wild West that someone from Maine might have."

Many of the anachronisms in *Legend* were deliberate and there for effect. To work with a theme like the use and abuse of celebrity, the creators needed to evoke elements (such as royalties) that may not have been present in a truly accurate picture of the life of the writer of dime thrillers. The discussion of such modern matters in 1876 is intended to have the effect of satire. In "Revenge of the Herd" Pratt is discussing business matters with Harry Parver, representative of E. C. Allen. He accuses the minions in the legal department at E. C. Allen of cheating him out of his royalties, but Parver assures him there is no truth to this. It is the Executive Vice-President of Legal Affairs who personally cheats Pratt out of his royalties.

Considering the qualities of the series, its untimely ending is all the more to be regretted. Had it continued, what would new episodes have been about? Bill Dial told me they would have moved forward in time from the base of 1876, but the period would have remained a sort of vague 1870s and 1880s era. On September 7, 1876, the James-Younger Gang would attempt to rob the First National Bank of Northfield, Minnesota. As history tells us, they would be defeated by the citizens of Northfield. As history does not tell us, this would be due in part to the intervention of Nicodemus Legend.

Bartok's nemesis, Thomas Edison, might step off the stage in Sheridan one day. But perhaps the most fascinating idea of all was that there would be a recurring villain, a sort of Professor Moriarty for Nicodemus Legend. It would be implied, but never explicitly stated, that this was John Wilkes Booth.

But it was not to be. Did it build an audience too slowly? Was it too unique? Was it ahead of its time? We will never know. But we can be certain of one thing ... whenever danger threatens, you will find Nicodemus Legend not far away in our imaginations. Backed up by the scientific genius of Professor Janos Christoff Bartok, the man born in Boston as Ernest Pratt, will be there as swiftly as the Legend Wings can carry him.

---

Episodes of *Legend* with original air dates

"Birth of a Legend" (April 18, 1995)

Written by Michael Piller and Bill Dial

Directed by Charles Correll

"Mr. Pratt Goes to Sheridan" (April 25)

Written by Michael Piller and Bill Dial

Directed by William Gereghty

"Legend on His President's Secret Service" (May 2)

Written by Robert Wilcox

Directed by Michael Vejar

"Custer's Next to Last Stand" (May 9)

Written by Bill Dial

Directed by William Gereghty

"The Life, Death and Life of Wild Bill Hickok" (May 16)

Written by Peter Allen Fields

Directed by Michael Caffey

"Knee-High Noon" (May 23)

Written by Steve Stollar

Directed by James L. Conway

"The Gospel According to Legend" (June 12)

Written by Jim Considine

Directed by Michael Vejar

"Bone of Contention" (June 20)

Written by George Geiger

Directed by Charles Correll

"Revenge of the Herd" (July 4)

Written by Tim Burns

Directed by Bob Balaban

"Fall of a Legend" (July 18)

Written by Ron Friedman and Bob Shayne

Directed by Michael Vejar

"Clueless in San Francisco" (July 25)

Written by Carol Caldwell and Marianne Clarkson

Directed by Charles Correll

"Skeletons in the Closet" (August 8)

Written by David Rich

Directed by Steve Shaw

An informal survey of viewers suggests that the favorite episode was "Clueless in San Francisco"; "Revenge of the Herd" and "Fall of a Legend" tied for second place with "Knee-High Noon," the third choice; "Birth of a Legend" and "Mr. Pratt Goes to Sheridan" were fourth; "The Life, Death and Life of Wild Bill Hickok" and "The Gospel According to Legend" were fifth. There were no votes for the other episodes although the final one had not aired when this survey was made. Many of those surveyed felt it was impossible to choose favorites since they enjoyed all of them.

Perhaps as interesting as what was reported as the favorite episodes were the reasons given for those choices. Most considered the humorous situations and the interactions between the characters of Pratt and Bartok to be most significant. After that, such elements as Pratt's very human failings and his acknowledgement and growing acceptance of the Legend side of his personality were appreciated. They liked the inventiveness of the pilot and the way the confusion between author and creation was worked into the story. Bartok's plans for helping Pratt escape from jail in "Fall of a Legend" and our hero's difficulty in dealing with horses were mentioned. What may have been the underlying reason that "Clueless" was so popular was the fleshing out of some elements of his past and his family when his mother and her entourage were introduced. From what he had said beforehand, the viewer might expect his mother to be something of a harridan. Mrs. Pratt, as played by Janis Paige, is a delight.

### Some Notes on the Nicodemus Legend Dime Novels

In most of the episodes there are references to the titles and plots of some of the many dime novels written by Ernest Pratt under his pseudonym of Nicodemus Legend. By 1876 he had published at least 15 and perhaps 20 novels. In "Bone of Contention" Professor Kendall says he has the complete collection of Legend "dime thrillers". When Pratt looks pleased, Kendall goes on, "The bane of my lecture halls. I am constantly confiscating them from the back row students."

The references are fascinating and we wish we knew more about them. To date, no collector of dime novels has reported seeing and reading one. The titles we have are only fragmentary. They lack the traditional sub-titles common to the majority of dime novels. (Is the full title *Wheels Across Montana; or, Legend on the Trail of the Stage Robbers?* We do not know.) We do not even know the correct sequence of publication, nor the



frequency of publication. Based on the evidence in the television version of the Legend saga we can draw some tentative conclusions. Based on the *Legend* press kit, we know that the earliest novel in the series was *Solitary Knight of the High Plains*. However, this is never mentioned by name in the television interpretation of Ernest Pratt's adventures. Since this was the first to feature Nicodemus Legend as a character we assume this was published by E. C. Allen. How many new authors could publish a book about a series character with one publisher and then sign a contract for the rest of the series with another publisher?

The Legend novels began publication in 1872. If there were 15 or 20 Legend novels by 1876 it can be assumed the frequency of publication to that date was quarterly, or four new novels per year. After that the popularity of the series was such that Pratt was often hard pressed to keep up with the demand. Once Pratt had supplied the publisher with enough manuscripts, E. C. Allen changed the publishing frequency to one per month. From what we have seen in the television version, Pratt was kept sufficiently busy in adventures with Professor Bartok and Ramos that he was never able to achieve the rate of one story per week as did some of his competitors.

Below, arranged alphabetically by title, is a list of the Nicodemus Legend dime novels for which we do have titles. (*Legend and the Quest for Wapiti the Elk* is not listed since that was only a working title. We do not know what was the published title, perhaps *Legend and the Quest for Thunderhooves the Buffalo*.) I am indebted to Tracy Ann Murray for supplying the majority of the titles on this list.

*Beasts of the Badlands*

*Blood on the Moonlit Prairie*

*Blood on the Texas Sands*

*Borderline*

*Double Shadows*

*Dry Gulch*

*Land of the Orange Sky*

*Legend and Cherokee Joe*

*Legend and the Chiricahua Caves*

*Legend and the Ghost of the Chiricahuas*

*Legend and the Guns of Brothers*

*Legend and the Massacre at Mesquite Flats*

*Legend Meets Blind Justice*

*Legend Meets Frontier Laddie*

*Legend's Lost Love*

*The Mystery of the Feathercreek Murder*

*Nicodemus Legend Tames the Colorado Land Barons*

*Solitary Knight of the High Plains*

*Traders of the Chisholm Trail*

*Wheels Across Montana*

*When Legend Came Marching Home*

# GUSTAVE AIMARD'S NOVELS CONCERNING THE TEXAS WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM MEXICO

James L. Evans  
University of Texas--Pan American

## Part Two: A Critique of the Author and His Trilogy

[Part One covered the life of the author and gave a survey of his trilogy about the Texas war, *The Border Rifles*, *The Freebooters*, and *The White Scalper*.]

We will now briefly consider some of the virtues as well as the faults of these stories.

Aimard attempts to give a sense of historical accuracy to the story. As he emphasizes in *The Border Rifles*, the fighting in the early days before the war was not done by a Texas army, but by isolated groups who formed under their own leader and carried out hit-or-miss skirmishes with Mexican forces. Jaguar's superiority as the leader of the Border Rifles leads to his later becoming an officer in the Texas army.

Aimard devotes several chapters to detailed accounts of the struggles to control the town of Galveston, which was actually a significant port, a populated area, and the site of much fighting in the early days of the war.

When the actual war is in progress, the author reports the major battles briefly and gives statistics of the casualties that are approximately those given in most historical accounts. The battle of the Alamo is mentioned briefly, but is referred to as the battle of Bejar (the early name for San Antonio), and there is reference to the battle of San Jacinto.

Of the men in the novels, only Santa Anna and Sam Houston are historical figures. But the repeated mention of these two in the latter half gives a sense of reality even though they are seldom in the scene itself. The accounts of the Mexican army "burning and plundering the towns" during the first two months after Santa Anna's arrival are given in summary without details, but they do seem vivid and realistic. (*Dime Library*, no. 153, p. 22, col 2)

Aimard does not have much admiration for military officers of any nationality. A typical example is the account of a Mexican general who learns of a victorious Mexican skirmish at one site, but goes into a fit of rage because

the victory occurred before he could arrive to claim credit for it. Often, Aimard's officers have little concern for the lives of their men. His most bitter attacks are on Santa Anna, who, he says, "has been the evil genius of Mexico, and has led it to infallible ruin by making himself the cause or pretext of all the wars and revolutions which, since his first assumption of power, have incessantly overwhelmed this unhappy country." (*DL*, no. 153, p. 22, col 1)

The events of the Texas war and of Indian activity are always present, but these accounts are merely deviations from or accessories to the real story which follows the main characters, Tranquil, Jaguar, Carmela, the White Scalper and others. But not one of these created characters seems real. Tranquil is sensible, humane, peaceloving, and perhaps the most genuine. He is a parallel to the author himself. Each was a Frenchman who arrived in South Texas before the revolution and participated in it. Tranquil's views on every topic correspond to those expressed by the author in his expository sections. We are repeatedly told what Tranquil does, we hear what he says, and we know what he thinks, yet he never comes across as a real person. All of the other characters, regardless of nationality or motives, are even less real. Carmela is as sweet and as unreal as any female who ever inhabited dime novel fiction. She pouts, she runs like a startled fawn, and (as Jaguar points out) she behaves like a coquettish child. The limited criticism of Aimard's works suggests that his inability to create realistic characters is evident in all of his works.

Aimard was familiar with the Indians of the Southwest, and he knew that French readers of his day found tales of American Indians exciting. But Indians did not play a significant role in the actual Texas war for independence, and in these three novels Indians do not play a significant role in the fictitious accounts of the fight for independence. However, they do get involved in the lives of the characters, and Carmela is often in danger of being captured by Apaches.

Aimard is sympathetic to the North American Indians. Even before introducing the first character in *The Border Rifles*, he comments on the American mistreatment of Indians in general and states that in time the Indians will "cry for vengeance." As Virgil L. Jones stated in 1930, "Aimard was never tired of calling attention to the mistreatment of the Indians by the 'North Americans.'" ("Gustave Aimard," *The Southwest Review* 15 (Summer 1930): 452-468) By the end of the third novel, we realize that most of the suffering in the story is caused by the Indians' revenge for Captain Watt's having taken Pawnee land.

The Pawnees destroy Captain Watt's settlement and massacre the whites, it is true, but Aimard shows their action to be justified. Captain Watt had taken



their land. In reporting the Pawnees' announcement of their plans to attack, Aimard states:

the red-skins [Indians of all tribes] have an eminently chivalrous character, and never, except in the case of a horse robbery or such matter, will they attack an enemy before warning him, that he may be on his guard . . . In fact, it is by cleverly working on this chivalrous character, of which the North Americans, we regret to say, do not possess a particle, that the whites have gained the majority of their victories over the red-skins. (*DL* no. 149, p. 9, col. 3)

Ironically, when speaking of Indians in general, Aimard also comments that they have the sense of "wild Beasts, of whom after all, they are only plagiarists" (*DL* no. 149, p. 20, col. 1). He comments that all Indian tribes keep the oaths which they make to each other, and he gives details of a major battle that occurred because the Comanches had relied on the oath of an evil Apache. He says that Indians who have been to American towns are not astounded by their civilization, but are puzzled that men "can voluntarily consent to shut themselves up in the smoky cages called houses". (*DL* no. 149, p. 12, col. 2)

Apaches and Comanches were both numerous in Texas at that time and Aimard fills many pages with accounts of them. These accounts serve several functions. They create excitement and add tension, they enable the author to relay information about the whereabouts of Carmela or the outcome of a battle in the war, they give interesting facts about the Indian traits and customs, and especially, they enable the author to give his views on various tribes and on United States-Indian relations. We have vivid and detailed descriptions of rituals, of a Comanche wedding, and of council meetings. Even though this information does not further the plot, the accounts do give a sense of reality to the narrative.

Actually white Americans regarded both Comanches and Apaches in Texas as evil and savage. To Aimard, the Comanches (as individuals and as a tribe) are good; in fact, as a whole, they seem more noble and more honorable than most Texans in these stories. The Comanches give refuge and often life membership in the tribe to other stranded good men, whether Indian or white. The Apaches, on the other hand, are totally bad. They kill and scalp whenever they can. Most of the Indian attacks in the story are against other Indian tribes, not against whites, and during their frequent warfare the reader is always eager for the Comanches to win. The sole virtues Aimard gives the Apaches are their stoicism and ability to accept pain.

We must remember that, according to the author himself, he had been captured, scalped, and abandoned by Apaches, but nursed to health by a

Comanche squaw who found him. Maybe that fact partially accounts for his praise of the Comanches, who were such bitter enemies of the Apaches. On this topic of Comanches, as on others, Aimard's opinions are similar to those of Tranquil, who states: "I love the red-men, and especially the Comanches, who, of all the nations dwelling on the prairies, are the noblest and most courageous, and rightly call themselves the Queen Nation of the prairies . . ." (*DL* no. 153, p. 9, col. 2)

Many Indians are massacred and scalped during these novels. Aimard seldom gives gruesome details of the events, however. Usually he merely states that a specific number were wounded or were killed and scalped.

Strangely enough, Aimard's most gruesome descriptions are of deeds by the Comanches, not the Apaches. One of the most lengthy and most vivid is very near the end. It tells that

Comanches rose like a legion of demons, and rushed headlong on their enemies. The latter hesitated for a moment, and then, terrified by this sudden attack, turned to fly . . . [but Texans were behind them]; hence the Apaches closed up shoulder to shoulder, and the butchery commenced. It was horrible, and lasted till day. These deadly enemies fought without uttering a sigh. . . . The sun, on rising, illuminated a horrible scene of carnage . . . [Very few Apaches survived.] The Comanches, intoxicated by the smell of blood and powder, furious at the resistance their enemies had offered . . . killed and scalped most of the others. (*DL*, no. 153, p. 18, col. 3)

Aimard then describes the aftermath of the battle. The Apache "bodies were left to the wild beasts, and the Comanche warriors, intoxicated with joy and pride," return home with some Apache prisoners. Aimard praises the Apaches' stoicism, but adds that "this stoicism peculiar to the red race surprised nobody" (*DL*, no. 153, p. 18, col. 3). He then tells of the torture the Comanche women inflict on the surviving Apache warriors. In Aimard's words, the women

rushed like furies on the unhappy prisoners, whom they overwhelmed with insults, casting stones and filth, and even at times trying to dig their sharp nails into their flesh . . . these [Comanche] women, arming themselves with knives, cut off several joints of [the Apaches'] fingers without [their] uttering a complaint; then, not contented with this sacrifice . . . began scarring. . . [Apache] faces, arms, bosoms, so that the blood soon ran down their whole bodies, and they became horrible to look upon. (*DL*, no. 153, p. 18, col. 3)

A Comanche seer summarized the event by saying that "the [b]lood shed by the

Apache warriors has been ransomed by the Comanche squaws". (*DL*, no. 153, p. 19, col. 1)

One of Aimard's greatest assets is his ability to hold the attention of the reader. He does this largely by including one exciting incident after another albeit confusing and involved as some of the accounts are. Aimard makes unlimited use of devices to add thrills and adventure. He includes spies, trap doors, secret entrances, pirates, personal conflicts between individuals, battles between hundreds of Indians, steep precipices, inconspicuous caves easy to hide in, privateers, robberies, and of course sudden and quick draws of the gun by concealed persons. The amount of pursuit in his stories is incredible. From the time the slave is pursued by his pistol-carrying master near the beginning of *The Border Rifles* until the end of the third novel, characters are always being pursued; some are chased at full speed, and some are followed secretly, slyly, and slowly. Among the many pursuers are Mexican troops, a large group of Apache warriors, a solitary Indian, a ship of privateers, and a colony of American thieves living in a desert hideout. At one time a group of Texas soldiers is chased by a herd of rampaging buffaloes, and once several Texas soldiers swimming in the Gulf of Mexico are pursued by many poisonous fish.

The stories have unlimited suspense. This suspense is created largely by employing several groups of characters. Frequently, when some characters are at a crucial point in the story, Aimard shifts to another set of characters. For example, one chapter ends with the statement that the Texan forces see a friend running toward them with news. Obviously the Texans soon learn what the news is, but the reader does not learn until after reading several chapters about an entirely different set of characters. This suspense holds the interest, but the outcome is sometimes not revealed until the next novel in the series—and since the three stories were always published separately the reader would not have been aware there was a sequel.

Aimard's works also have several flaws. His geography is too vague. Very few place names, either actual or fictitious, are given. Of course, French readers of the 1850s knew nothing about the geography of southern Texas, thus leaving the author free to use his imagination all he chose. A reader of the 1990s would assume, however, that Aimard's actual experiences in the area would lead to more specific locations than "in the desert."

The stories also include too much of the improbable. Very often the outcome is determined by the unexpected appearance of a character at a most improbable moment, and sometimes this character is one whom no one had assumed to be still alive. On one occasion the White Scalper is attacked by a poisonous fish,

and his body is left floating on the ocean. A passing ship rescues him, but the crew, after much examination, conclude that he is dead and toss his inert body back into the sea. By then, however, the ship is near land, and the waves wash the body to the edge of the water; the lower part of his body is covered by water, but his head and chest are on land, and the Scalper revives.

Even more unlikely is the final news about a Texas leader known only as El Alferez. This somewhat effeminate officer has led several victorious battles before his final one in which his three hundred men repel the Mexican force of 1,500. After he is killed in this battle his soldiers and the reader learn that "El Alferez, the daring and formidable partisan, was a woman". (DL, no. 153, p. 22, col. 1)

In spite of these weaknesses, such things as the suspense, the action, and the adventure made these stories very popular both in France in the 1850s and among dime novel readers in later decades. Though forgotten today, the Frenchman who wrote under the name of *Gustave Aimard* was extremely popular during his lifetime, primarily because his stories based on his American experiences have the characteristics of dime novels that were to be written about the West years later.

### Bibliographic Addendum

Gustave Aimard was widely published in dime novels. Besides the titles in *Beadle's Dime Library*, mentioned by Jim Evans, his novels were published in at least thirteen separate dime novel series. Some of these were reprints of the Beadle publications, but many were not. The majority of the titles were published by George Munro. The next most numerous were those published by Max Stein, all of which were reprints from Munro. M. J. Ivers, F. M. Lupton, Lovell, and T. B. Peterson follow in number of titles published. Peterson even produced an unnumbered set of *Gustave Aimard's Works* in the 1870's. The three novels discussed by Jim Evans were also published by Max Stein in his *Border Series* and by George Munro in his *Boys' Dashaway Series*, *Lucky Series*, and in the *Seaside Library (Pocket Edition)*. *The Border Rifles* and *The Freebooters*, but not *The White Scalper*, were published in *Lovell's Library* in 1887. The other seven dime novel series which published Aimard were Stein's *Adventure Series*, *Cowboy Series*, *Indian Series*, *Outlaw Series*, and *Pioneer Series*. In addition there were the *American Series* (Ivers) and *Bijou Series* (Lupton). All told, there were at least 170 separate appearances of Gustave Aimard's works in dime novel format.

Eddie LeBlanc



# CONVENTION REPORT:

## PULPCON 24

August 3-6 1995

Walter Albert  
Pittsburgh, PA

On the first weekend in August, Bowling Green State University hosted Pulpcon for the second year in a row, welcoming more than two hundred fans, collectors, and dealers to the giant ballroom on the second floor of the Student Union, which had been sub-divided into a large dealers' room and two smaller areas that served as a seminar/auction room and banquet room.

Although the convention program, which featured the official introduction of special guests, roundtable discussions, and the annual Lamont award, did not get underway until Friday evening, by late Thursday afternoon the dealer tables displayed a dazzling assortment of pulps, out-of-print and often much-sought-after hardcover and paperback titles, juvenile series, and original artwork including a portfolio of Hannes Bok sketches, at least two Virgil Finlays, and a particularly fine William Heath-Robinson.

Many of the exhibitors were collectors rather than dealers, and their tables were often unattended while they prowled the room in search of acquisitions for their own collections. This opening day is traditionally the time when some of the most desirable purchases and trades are effected, and many a tale is told of the rare find that was scooped up at a price far below its perceived value. It also occasions later rueful reminiscing, as collectors recall the item they left for their second circuit of the room, only to find that it was gone when they returned. This is no arena for the faint-of-heart and aggressive foraging is the rule of the game.

Writer Michael Avallone and artist Everett Raymond Kinstler were the Guests of Honor, while writer Hugh B. Cave, a Guest of Honor in 1983 for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the birth of *Weird Tales*, returned as a Special Guest and was interviewed by pulp researcher Don Hutchison.

Avallone, who was first published in the pulps in 1950 and went on to a long and successful career in magazines and paperbacks, is undoubtedly best known as the creator of the Ed Noon private eye series. He has been a frequent Pulpcon visitor since 1981, and his well-received address was an affectionate tribute to the pulp era.

Ray Kinstler's first pulp illustrations were for the *Doc Savage* and *Shadow*

magazines in 1945, and he later contributed illustrations to many of the digest western and science-fiction pulps of the 1950s. He is also a notable portrait artist, with four presidents among his subjects, and his work is displayed in such major museums as the Metropolitan in New York and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington. His slide show of his art work was one of the highlights of the convention, and in the accompanying commentary he lived up to his reputation as a "superb raconteur."

The annual Lamont award, given for significant contributions to the pulp, was received by editor/publisher John Gunnison, and the Pulpcon Radio Players, ably directed by Don Ramlow, recreated "Chain of Command," a science-fiction satire from the NBC series "X-Minus One" that featured stories from *Galaxy Magazine*. There were panel discussions of Pulpcon's past and its potential for future growth, and both the Saturday and Friday night programs were concluded by auctions.

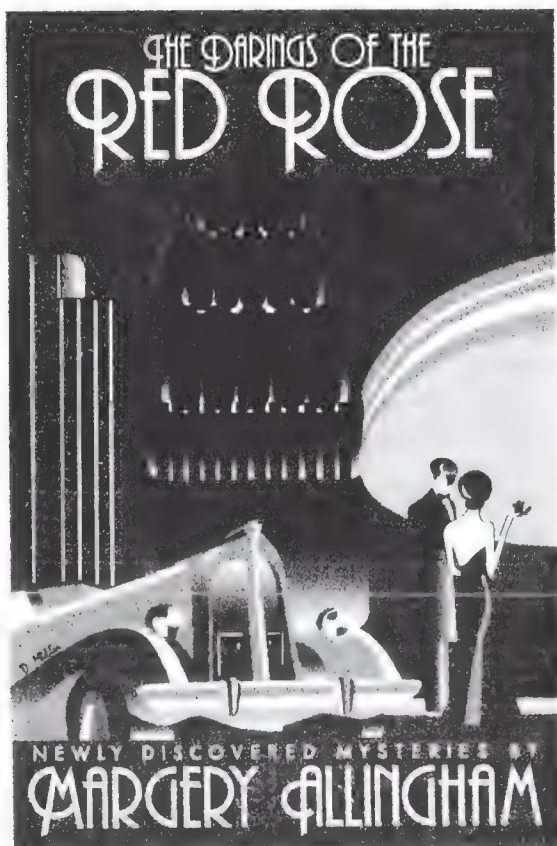
Tony Davis edited the well-produced *Spicy Pulpster* #5, a 36-page magazine with articles on pulp subjects, as well as "Wartime Reading Rage," an article by Buz Swerkstrom on the role of Beadle's Dime Novels as escape reading for soldiers during the Civil War. The article, which was acknowledged as previously published but with no source given, was illustrated by reproductions of several covers. The lead article was a tribute by Link Hullar to artist Frank Hamilton, which included a fine selection of his work. Hamilton's work certainly deserved its showcasing, but one would have liked to see a similar effort for honored guest artist Ray Kinstler. "Final Chapters" presented obituaries for several pulp writers, with especially good contributions by Hugh B. Cave for Robert Bloch, Will Murray for Ryerson Johnson, and Don Hutchison for Karl Edward Wagner.

The convention wrapped up on Sunday morning, and Rusty Hevelin and his Pulpcon committee are to be commended for another smooth-running event, with the attendees undoubtedly sharing my impatience as the pulp community begins another countdown for this long-running, unique gathering.

# LEGEND™



A SOCIALITE ROBIN HOOD  
FROM 1930!



Newly discovered short crime stories with art deco elegance

**The Darings of the Red Rose**  
by

Margery Allingham

First edition limited to 850 copies; trade paperback, \$15.00 + \$2.25 shipping

CRIPPEN & LANDRU, PUBLISHERS

Department DNRU

P. O. Box 9315

Norfolk, VA 23505-9315

Recent books in review, or current and forthcoming publications noted.

### NANCY DREW ONCE MORE!

Carolyn Stewart Dyer and Nancy Tillman Romalov (eds). *Rediscovering Nancy Drew*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995. 281 p. ISBN 0-87745-500-7, \$24.95, ISBN 087745-501-5 pap, \$12.95

As we all know, 1993 was the Year of Nancy Drew when the University of Iowa hosted the conference which attracted so much media attention. Now we have a selection of the papers and presentations given at that conference in a form that adds substance to the memories. In 27 essays, arranged in 4 sections (Creating and Publishing Nancy Drew; Reading Nancy Drew, Reading Stereotypes; Collecting and Studying Nancy Drew; Transforming Nancy Drew) scholars, librarians, collectors, writers, and readers attempt to explain the phenomenon that began in 1930 with *The Secret of the Old Clock*, by Mildred Wirt Benson, writing as Carolyn Keene. And there is literally something here for everyone who has even a passing interest in the work of the Stratemeyer Syndicate and the influence of the durable detective from River Heights. Bibliography of Nancy Drew titles (through 1994), titles by Mildred Wirt Benson, and a good secondary bibliography. This is perhaps the most significant study of a series book here we have. jrc

### THE SOURCE OF SOME MYTHS OF THE WEST

Thomas W. Knowles and Joe R. Lansdale (eds). *Wild West Show!* New York: Wings, 1994. 240 p. ISBN 0-517-10186-6, \$19.95

This is a cornucopia of essays relating the fact and legend of the Old West. With over 200 illustrations, photos and paintings, this "coffee table" volume is a browser's delight. Contributors include Loren D. Estleman, Brian Garfield, Bill Pronzini, Ed Gorman, and other writers of westerns, fact and fiction. The legends of the real west (Buffalo Bill, Wild Bill Hickok) are here along with the legends of the "reel" west (Tom Mix, Hopalong Cassidy, the Cisco Kid, John Wayne, and others). Along with these are articles on western dime novels and pulp magazines as well. We wish we could say it is free of error, but as with all works of human manufacture there are mistakes. There was more than one issue of *The Lone Ranger* pulp magazine and the title of the *New York Detective Library* is incorrectly cited. Estleman's article on Ned Buntline ("Ten Cent



Homer") is not intended to be more than a quick survey, but we wish he had given a source for his statement about the myth of the Buntline Special. We share his opinion, but we wish we knew where he got his facts. Used with caution, this volume should provide many hours of pleasure. jrc

## SCANDINAVIAN SENSATIONS

The readers of **DNRU** mastering esoteric tongues might like to know of the existence of the following recent Scandinavian books:

Willy B. (pseud. of Willy Bakken). *Vakre damer og blodig død: den norske pocketbokas historie 1949-1994*. Oslo: Bladkompaniet, 1994. ISBN 82-509-33191-2, paper (no price given). [A history and listing of Norwegian paperback series from 1949 to 1994, including some lists of individual volumes in series.]

Johan Wopenka. *På smekmånad med Gröna Skräcken: kioskhäften i Sverige: en förteckning*. BJW-förlaget, 1995. ISBN 91-971620-4-3, paper (no price given). [A short history and story index of the most important Swedish pulp magazines from 1930 to 1960.] Sent in by email on the Internet by Ola Ström.

## BOOKS AND PERIODICALS RECEIVED

*The Bean Home Newsletter*, Vol. 7 no. 4 (Spring 1995) [Dedicated to the memory of Walter R. Brooks, author of the "Freddy the Pig" series; a publication of the Friends of Freddy; includes a review of Brooks' *New York: An Intimate Guide*] Connie Arnold, 5A Laurel Hill Road, Greenbelt, MD 20770 1779. \$12 for two years.

*The Horatio Alger Society Newshoy*, Vol. 33, no. 4 (July August 1995) [For collectors of Horatio Alger and other juvenile series authors; includes a report on the Library of Congress Symposium and more new information about the Stratemeyer Syndicate based on James Keeline's research in the Copyright Office] Robert E. Kasper, 585 E. St. Andrews Drive, Media, PA 19063. \$20 per year, which includes membership in the Society.

*Martha's KidLit Newsletter*, Vol. 7, no. 4 (Summer 1995) [For collectors of Out of Print Childrens' Books; focus on Bessie Pease Gutmann; this publication will be published monthly, beginning in 1996; Fall issue emphasis to be on Horatio Alger] Martha Rasmussen, Box 1488, Ames, IA 50014. \$30 per year.

*Pulp Review*, No. 23 (September 1995) [Facsimile editions of pulp magazine fiction from the past; this issue contains another novel in the "Purple Invasion" series by Emile Tepperman, writing as Curtis Steele, *Liberty's Suicide Legions*, from 1937, as well as a short story from a 1934 issue of *Vice Squad Detective*.] Adventure House, P. O. Box 3232, Frederick, MD 21705-3232. \$6.00 per issue. \$1.25 postage. With issue number 24, the series title changes to *High Adventure*.

*Story Paper Collectors' Digest*, Vol. 49, nos. 582-584 (June-August 1995) [For collectors of British boys' and girls' stories and papers; the British *Dime Novel Round-Up* and a publication that can be recommended without reservation] Mary Cadogan, 46 Overbury Avenue, Beckenham, Kent BR3 2PY, England. Monthly publication. Write for subscription rates.

*Susabella Passengers and Friends*, (July 1995) [A nostalgia publication for collectors and readers of all children's series books] \$15 per year, bi monthly. Garrett Knute Lothe, 80 Ocean Pines Lane, Pebble Beach, CA 93953.

*The Whispered Watchword*, Vol. #95-6 (August 1995), Vol. #95-7 (September 1995) [Newsletter of the Society of Phantom Friends; regular features include author interviews and Phantom Unmasked: profiles of collectors; reviews of new series books] Kate Emburg, 4100 Cornelia Way, N. Highland, CA 95660. \$26 per year.

*Yellowback Library*, Number 134 (August 1995) [Series Books, Dime Novels, and Related Literature; this is the place to look for dealers who may have those long wanted books] Gil O'Gara, P. O. Box 36172, Des Moines, IA 50315. \$30 per year, \$15 for six months.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I've been a member of the "Happy Hours Brotherhood" for several years, though my interest in Dime Novels and young people's books is somewhat limited.

Specifically, my specialty involves the Asian presence in Popular Culture. As you know, Asian characters, Chinatown locales, etc. have been a mainstay in the Dime Novel and Pulp genre.

I am presently working on a computerized almanac of prominent people who have enriched our collective culture. Areas researched include music, theatre, art, invention, science, business and Popular Culture. This project requires little talent but much tenacity. I merely take any standard work on a given subject, begin at "A" and work my way to "Z". Yet, there are people who elude me. In

many cases it's because they might not be part of the "mainstream" of literature, theatre, invention, etc.

Permit me to express a random thought. I know that **Dime Novel Round-Up** is part of the archives in several libraries. For future scholars, would it not be a good idea to publish either in a series or single tome a biographical guide to those authors and publishers who have enriched the genre? I, for one, wish I could find a single source which would give me authors' names, pseudonyms, exact dates of birth/death, place of birth, etc. I doubt such a work would be a "best-seller," but surely it would contribute to the corpus of specialized research material. Hopefully, this is something for you and/or your associates to think about.

Albert M. Stangler  
Manchester, NH

We helped Mr. Stangler with information he sought on Fran Striker and told him of our own reference work in progress, *The Dime Novel Companion*, which will supply some of this information for one of our areas of interest. Would others like to see a series of brief biographical sketches of writers and others in our fields of dime novels, juvenile series books and pulp magazines? More to the point: would any of you care to undertake to supply us with entries for such a series? Ed

Thanks for mentioning in your **Round-Up** two issues ago that I still needed many Merriwell novels. I only received one response and none of the issues I needed were there. However I did buy Laura Owen's run and now have a complete collection myself. However, in doing so, I now find myself with over 200 duplicates—hence my ad [elsewhere in this issue]. I'm not sure if anyone wants this series anymore, but I'll find out.

I also decided to sell the **Round-Ups** I've accumulated through the years, if anyone wants them. One thing I noticed in looking them over was that there were a lot more ads years ago and many people were selling and buying Merriwells.

Continued success with your **Round-Up**. I like your heavier covers and larger print—much easier on the eyes.

Dick Hoffman  
Youngstown, NY

We knew that there were issues of the **Round-Up** in years past which consisted of one page of articles and three pages of ads. It appears that everyone is advertising over in **Yellowback Library** and not in the **Round-Up**. Ed

Beautiful August issue. I have been a member of the Dime Novel group since I began corresponding with Ralph Cummings, Stanley Pachon and Eddie LeBlanc in the early 60's.

I have a rare edition: a biography of George W. Trendle who created the Lone Ranger for radio, books, tv and many other adventure stories. (pictorial dust wrapper, very good condition) If anyone might be interested, please correspond with me.

Irene Gurman  
1800 South Drive #11E  
Lake Worth, FL 33461

Ms Gurman does not indicate the author of the Trendle biography, but it may be one by Mary Bickle, which we have seen cited in David Holland's definitive history of The Lone Ranger series. Ed

## NOTES & QUERIES

**More Nancy Drew.** Didi Johnson has sent in some information about yet another new Nancy Drew series. "*New Lives, New Loves*, the first title in the "Nancy Drew on Campus" series from Pocket Books, follows Nancy and her friends Bess and George through their first days as freshmen at Wilder College. Aimed at a young adult audience, the mass market paperbacks continue the trend started in the "Nancy Drew Files," by showing Nancy as a young woman more interested in dating than detection—though she does eventually (and somewhat reluctantly) solve a mystery in her dormitory." And on September 23, the new *Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew* syndicated television series debuted. It is scheduled at some unusual times in some areas (over the noon hour or as early as 5:00 in the morning!), so check your local *TV Guide*.

**Defining Series Books.** Joe Ruttar responded to our request for something for the Round-Up with the following interesting note:

The classification of Boys' Series Books comprises a broad sphere in the employment of the term "boy". A substantial number of the series novels enjoyed by youthful readers feature exploits by young men such as Tom Swift, Don Sturdy, and Dave Porter. Also in this category are individual titles by



various authors which, by virtue of a common theme shared by other books from the publisher, are grouped into such series as The Boys of Liberty Library. Yet another type of boys' series books are those which highlight the word "boys" in their titles. This we consider to be a misnomer as the boys are really adults. Among those so captioned are the Racer Boys, the Speedwell Boys, and the Motor Boys.

Many of the boys' series books which we enjoy were written in the first half of this century. Anyone who had the pleasure of reading them while growing up fondly relishes these tales with a passion that seems to increase with the years. Some of these aficionados collect and peruse them in order to recall the memories of their youth as well as to provide an enjoyable diversion from the pressures of the modern world. Once the bug of collecting bites, there may be no stopping them until they build collections with dust jackets and more than one edition.

The average juvenile reader of today requires an adjustment of sorts to be able to delight in these tomes of yesteryear. The absence of many of our modern conveniences in these books may ultimately result in a loss of interest. The language used by some of the early series book authors was nothing like the speech of the average boy. What would a modern boy make of phrases like "He tittered gleefully" or "He cachinnated uproariously" in place of "He laughed." Such highbrow language was a response by our authors to criticism by educators of the day that their works might have a degrading influence on the character of young readers.

Joe goes on to explain that he had excluded sports stories and boy scout stories from his discussion "due to the static nature and continuity of [those] story lines."

**A Well-Deserved Honor.** Long time subscriber Darrell C. Richardson received the Good Shepherd Award of the Southern Baptist Convention in Memphis, Tennessee, this summer, for outstanding service to youth in church activities and Scouting. This accolade is in addition to the earlier ones he has received for his scholarship to the pulp magazine field. Dr. Richardson has published much relating to Edgar Rice Burroughs and is the author of the first comprehensive bibliography of the works of Max Brand.

**Vincent Starrett Stories Wanted.** Peter Ruber, Box 502, Oakdale, NY 11769, is looking for copies of fiction by the Dean of Sherlockians, Vincent Starrett, that appeared between 1916 and 1940 in such periodicals as *Black Mask*, *Short Stories*, *Wayside Tales*, *Snappy Stories*, *Real Detective Tales*, and *Mystery Magazine*, among others. A xerox of the story will be sufficient.

**Young Wild West in the Movies (part three).**

This concludes the reprints of trade paper synopses and reviews of the motion picture versions of the Young Wild West dime novels from Frank Tousey's *Wild West Weekly*.

*Young Wild West Cornered by Apaches* (released July 12, 1912)

**Synopsis:** Starlight, a beautiful Indian girl, is betrothed to Young Bull, the chief's son, whose love she does not reciprocate. Young Wild West comes in the nick of time and saves Starlight from the clutches of her savage adorer. The girl gladly joins the Americans' camp.

Young Bull, vowing revenge, lies in wait for Young Wild West. They meet and a terrific hand to hand combat ensues. The Indian brave is vanquished, his recital makes the old chief rage with anger, which causes him to command the Indians to bring back the girl at any cost.

Notwithstanding the Americans' watchfulness, the redmen succeed in carrying out their chief's mandate, but Young Wild West is not to be denied. With a few of his followers he gets on the trail and retakes Starlight. This causes the Indians to go on the warpath and a big battle follows. Young Wild West and his sweetheart, Arietta, hold many braves at bay until their ammunition is gone, and then, just as they are being captured, his friends come forth with Young Bull in tow. An exchange of prisoners is soon made and peace restored. Starlight returns to the American camp. (*The Moving Picture World*)

**Review:** Here Young Wild West is seen at his favorite stunt of holding at bay two or three score of Indians with the help of a girl companion and a couple of revolvers that never seem to need reloading, although a great number of shots are fired from them. The young hero incurs the enmity of an Indian tribe by rescuing an Indian girl from the unwelcome attentions of a young chief. The maiden is taken to the camp of the brave one, and when the young chief appears there, he is defeated in a knife duel by Young Wild West. When the news reaches the Indian village, the old chief, father of the girl, commands his warriors to bring her back because he has promised her to the young chief. The Indians attack the camp and take the girl home, but Young Wild West does a rescue act, retakes the girl and then holds them off till reinforcements arrive. The Indians fall in large numbers, but the youthful wonder, as usual, comes through without a scratch. This sort of picture is probably entertaining to the average boy, but it can have no especial charm for the older people. (*The New York Dramatic Mirror*)

*Young Wild West Trapping a Tricky Rustler* (released July 19, 1912)

**Synopsis:** Ike Bowers, the foreman of a small cattle ranch, is also a cattle rustler, and he and three companions share in the profits of the stolen cattle. Ike even steals cattle from the ranch where he is employed. Wild West and his party stop at this ranch and hear about the ranch man's losses. He soon comes to the conclusion that the foreman is the guilty party. The ranchman's daughter and Arietta, Young Wild West's sweetheart, go for a ride. Over the range they look down in a canyon and are surprised to see the

foreman and two men driving four of her father's head of cattle along. They follow them and see them enter the hiding place. Unfortunately the girls' horses make a noise; the cattle rustlers hear them, give chase, capture the girls and bring them back to the canyon. There they tie them to a tree. At an opportune moment, the ranchman's daughter becomes free and runs for help. Wild West takes the girl on his horse as she shows the hiding place of the rustlers. They go back again to the road in time to meet the cowboys. Wild West leads them to the rustlers' rendezvous. A long and exciting chase follows. Finally, the bad men are rounded up and handed over to the sheriff. Arietta jubilantly returns to the ranch with her hero, Young Wild West. (*The Moving Picture World*)

*Review:* The usual stunts of Young Wild West are here given again. The marvelous energy of the young man, the swift rides, the rapid and telling shooting and the inevitable capture of the bad men at the end. Young Wild West should surely be the idol of many an American youth, but to the average spectator his deeds week after week are apt to become tiresome. This time a ranchman is losing cattle and he invites Young Wild West and his party to help him find the thief. The foreman of the ranch continues to report cattle missing, until one day the two girls, while riding, discover that the foreman himself is at the head of the rustlers. But the rustlers see and capture the girls and then retire to talk things over. One girl gets free and tells Young Wild West of the affair. His pal goes to warn the ranchman, and in the end, after a long hard ride and a great sufficiency of shootings, the cowboys headed by Young Wild West, capture all the rustlers. (*The New York Dramatic Mirror*)

*Young Wild West's Prairie Pursuit* (released July 26, 1912)

*Synopsis:* Horse thieves stealing four horses from the Bar Y ranch are seen by one of the cowboys, who gives the alarm. The ranchmen and cowboys give chase. The horse thieves ride through the woods and, coming into a small clearing, almost run over a small party camping. They would have run the party down had not Young Wild West pulled the leader of the horse thieves from his horse and then knocked him down, when he started to draw his gun. No knowing that the four men have stolen horses with them, Wild West lets them go.

They are hardly gone when the ranchman and his men appear. Wild West leads them in the direction of the horse thieves. They lose the trail in the woods and return to the camp. The ranchman invites them to the ranch for a few days and asks their aid in running down the horse thieves. They accept the invitation and packing up, they leave for the ranch, where on arriving they are made welcome. In the meantime the thieves arrive at their house in the woods and hide the horses. The leader swears to get even with Young Wild West, so dressing like an old hunter, and putting on a false beard, he goes to town alone. He is overheard talking to a man by Young Wild West, who has ridden to town with his sweetheart, Arietta, and her girl chum. Wild West stops when he hears the voice, and after making sure, pulls the beard from the robber's face. The man, however, manages to escape. Wild then gives chase, followed by the two girls. The horse thief reaches his pals on the edge of the wood and they watch Wild West coming.

and decide to steal his sweetheart as she passes since she is far behind the others. Wild and Mabel pass the place where the thieves are, thinking the man they are after is ahead. And when Arietta passes, one of the men rides out and pulls the girl from her horse, and turning, dashes into the woods. Wild West, hearing the cries of the girl, turns and gives chase. But again, the villains get away and reach their house first, but Wild West sees them from a clearing and is about to enter when he sees some of the men come and walk towards the place where the horses are hidden. Wild West is about to untie Arietta when one of the villains appears and is soon at Wild's mercy. A desperate fight ensues between our hero and the gang leader. Mabel returns with the cowboys just in time to capture the entire band of bad men. (*The Moving Picture World*)

*Review:* The doughty hero seems to have oceans of spare time in which to solve the difficulties of others. So when rustlers visit the Bar Y ranch, the owner asks the aid of the mighty crime hater. Young Wild West and his two women companions visit a nearby town and there he recognizes the leader of the rustlers in disguise. In the pursuit that follows, the rustlers capture one of the girls, but the hero of many Western stories sticks to the trail while the other girl returns to alarm the ranch. Young Wild West waits until three of the rustlers have left the cabin and overcomes the other two. The cowboys arrive at about this time and a trap is laid for the other three who readily fall into it and are easily captured. From a certain viewpoint these pictures are laughable, although they are not supposed to be, and there are probably those who take them seriously. As a general rule, they are poorly acted and there is no doubt that they give an erroneous impression of the West. (*The New York Dramatic Mirror*)

*Young Wild West Washing Out Gold* (released August 2, 1912)

*Synopsis:* Young Wild West, on his way to a mining camp, saves an old miner from the hands of three bad men, who are trying to rob him. The old miner is very grateful. Wild West and his party camp for the night near the old miner's cabin. The bad men also camp in the vicinity. Feeling that they have been handled roughly by Wild West, they go over to Wild West's camp to get satisfaction, but they get a good trouncing instead.

The old miner overhears the bad men plotting to shoot up the camp of Wild West that night and he hurries to the camp and informs the party who thank him. The bad men sneak over to Wild West's camp and, getting above it, start a fusillade.

The next morning Wild leaves for the nearby town. On crossing a dried-up stream, Wild discovers gold. They quickly dismount, put up their tents again and start to wash out the gold.

One of the bad men passing sees Wild West's lucky strike and hurries back to the camp. The leader of the gang has a plan to get the gold and hurries back to town. They hire a few loafers out of the barroom to go back and help them overcome Wild West and his party. They start for the party's camp. But Wild West, who has left the camp to take some samples of gold to town, sees them coming, and drawing into the bushes, overhears their plans and at once goes for the sheriff. The party washing the gold see them coming and knowing their inability to fight the larger force, they run to the old miner's cabin for



shelter and are just in time for the bad men to come up and open fire at them. Suddenly those in the cabin stop firing, for they spy the sheriff and his men, led by Young Wild West. The bad men rush toward the cabin and are caught between two fires. Thoroughly beaten, they are captured and led away by the sheriff. (*The Moving Picture World*)

*Review:* The film is not different from any of those depicting the weekly doings of this energetic young man, who seems to have a corner on the rescue act on the Western plains. As this sort of film goes, it is well done, and the scenes at least are interesting even if one is not in sympathy with what answers for a plot in the story. Young Wild West and his party start out by saving an old miner from robbery at the hands of three Western bad men, and the miner later squares up the account by warning Young Wild West that the bad men are going to shoot up his camp that night, the miner having overheard them plotting the thing. The following day, while the hero and his party are on their way to the town they strike gold, but are seen by one of the bad men, who immediately sets about organizing a gang of six to get revenge on the adventurers. Young Wild West, however, discovers the gang on their way to the camp and he sets out for town to get the sheriff and his posse. The hero's party takes refuge in the miner's cabin when the gang of bad men approach, but they are hard pressed when Young Wild West and the minions of the law ride up and capture the desperadoes. There are not quite as many bullets fired in this film as usual, but no doubt the director will correct this in the next one. (*The New York Dramatic Mirror*)

Gil O'Gara has pointed out a reference to the series in Kalton C. Lahue's *World of Laughter* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966). It is suggested that the reason the films did not succeed is that exhibitors "complained that patrons read the magazine and stayed away from the theaters." (pp. 45-46)

---

### For Sale

Over 200 Frank & Dick Merriwell paperback novels at low prices.

Send large s.a.s.e. for listing.

240 **Dime Novel Round-Up** issues (1965-1994), plus 11 bibliographic listings.

All vg/better, but a few may have some pencil marks in ad section.

All for \$100, postpaid & insured.

Dick Hoffman

348 Walnut Lane

Youngstown, NY 14174



# Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Publication Title <b>DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP</b>	2. Publication No. <table border="1"><tr><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>7</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>0</td></tr></table>	1	5	7	-	1	4	0	3. Filing Date <b>SEPT 18, 1995</b>
1	5	7	-	1	4	0			
4. Issue Frequency <b>Bi-monthly</b>	5. No. of Issues Published Annually <b>6</b>	6. Annual Subscription Price <b>\$15.00</b>							

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, City, County, State, and ZIP+4) (Not Printer)

**P. O. Box 226 Dundas, Minnesota 55019-0226**

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not Printer)

**SAME**

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do Not Leave Blank)

Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address)

**J. RANDOLPH COX P. O. BOX 226 DUNDAS, MINNESOTA 55019-0226**

Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address)

**SAME**

Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address)

**SAME**

10. Owner (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereafter the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock; if not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given; if owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address as well as that of each individual must be given; if the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, its name and address must be stated.) (Do Not Leave Blank.)

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address
SAME	SAME

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check here. ☒ None

Full Name	Complete Mailing Address

12. For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: (Check one) ☒ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months ☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (If changed, publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

13. Publication Name <b>DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP</b>	14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below <b>August 1995</b>	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies (Net Press Run)	400	350
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation (1) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, and Counter Sales (Not Mailed)	0	0
(2) Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions (Include Advertisers' Proof Copies/Exchange Copies)	250	250
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b(1) and 15b(2))	250	250
d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, Complimentary, and Other Free)	5	15
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or Other Means)	0	0
f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e)	5	15
g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f)	255	265
h. Copies Not Distributed (1) Office Use, Leftovers, Spoiled	145	85
(2) Return from News Agents	0	0
i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h(1), and 15h(2))	400	350
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c / 15g x 100)	64%	71%

16. This Statement of Ownership will be printed in the October issue of this publication. ☐ Check box if not required to publish.

17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner

Date

*J. Randolph Cox*

Editor-Publisher

Sept 18, 1995

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

## Dime Novel Round-Up

### Guidelines for Contributors

We welcome articles on any aspect of the areas of dime novels (1860-1915), story papers (1839-1924), juvenile series books (1850-1945), and pulp magazines (1896-1950). Scholarly articles, reports of significant research, notes, and book reviews are wanted. Manuscripts normally should not exceed 10 typed pages in length although longer ones will be considered. Notes and reviews should be no more than 500 words, feature articles 2,500 words.

All pages must be typewritten or computer printed, double-spaced. Computer users should include a copy on diskette, preferably in WordPerfect 5.1 or ASCII format. Illustrations that accompany a manuscript should be black and white photographs or sharp xeroxes in color or black and white.

Bibliography and notes should be in accordance with the *Chicago Manual of Style* (14th edition) or *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (3rd edition). These reference works are available in most public, college, or university libraries.

Please send your manuscripts to the office of the editor. Since manuscripts are submitted to one or more outside reviewers, please allow approximately three months for a decision.

### Dime Novel Round-Up

J. Randolph Cox, Editor

P.O. Box 226

Dundas, MN 55019-0226

---

# LEGEND™



All *Legend* artwork in this issue is the property of Paramount Pictures and is used by permission

---

Dime Novel Sketches series by J. Randolph Cox

Cover illustration courtesy of Paramount Pictures